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AWD

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# Reflection

This semester has been interesting. I haven't taken a writing course since AP English Literature in 12th grade of High School, and I wasn't expecting the class to be as good as it was. I definitely learned a lot about technical writing, which is extremely helpful in properly creating written material for my field. I've taken classes that are considered writing intensive, but not like this. For those classes, the most intensive writing aspect was the creation of system requirements specifications, but in AWD I learned how to effectively relay technical knowledge to both fellow colleagues and the general public. In the beginning of the semester, the first assignment was a short essay on a technical topic for a technically literate audience. I chose to write about Subsurface Scattering shaders, because the topic of computer graphics is highly compelling to me, and I felt that it would be interesting to express factual information about the subject. I knew that I was going to be rough around the edges with my grammar, but I did decently well on the first assignment. My fellow classmates gave excellent feedback, and I found the revision club meetings to be fun and insightful. My revision club partners informed me that my topic was compelling and I did a good job explaining it, but I was missing the more technical information that makes my arguments more justifiable. This theme was pervasive throughout my work during the rest the semester. Although I improved significantly in this area, I feel there is always work to be done in backing up my arguments with ample evidence, citations, images and data. There is a concise methodology to it, which can only be learned. There is no intuitive way to write literature such as this; rather, papers in this field are written similarly for external consistency. Papers such as these are highly technical and filled with data, and so they must be treated almost like an encyclopedia, where a reader can turn to any page and learn something new without trying too hard. The next assignment was very visually driven, and I was able to put my expert knowledge of the animation suite Autodesk Maya to use. I created a compact, concise, illustrated guide to creating a primitive yet effective and extendable animation rig in Maya. During the creation of this I was very confident, both in the creation of the reference images, as well as the writing itself. This confidence reflected itself in my grade for the assignment. The following is an excerpt from unit 2:

> Select the IK Solver tool and switch to RP Solver, then select the shoulder, followed by the wrist. This creates a rotate-plane solver between these two joints. The system doesn't know how to orient the elbow, so create a nurbs shape or locator object, select it, then the IK solver you just created, and create a Pole Vector Constraint. Lastly, create a nurbs shape such as a circle (shown in green), and hold V to snap move it to the wrist joint. Select the circle, then select the IK Solver, and create a Point constraint. This allows you to control the IK Handle without manipulating it directly. You can also create and Orient Constraint between the nurbs circle and your wrist joint that will allow you to control the hand with FK.

This excerpt show my use of precise technical terms only applicable within 3d animation suites. The language is appropriate, and the terms, although not shown here, are highlighted and bolded to guide the readers' eyes towards the corresponding terms in the illustration. The image I created was accurate, and paired well with the instructions. The next assignment I admittedly did not put my whole heart into. We wrote about a technical topic for a non-technical audience. I know I did not do as good of a job on this as I ought to have, and it is because the topic I chose was too broad and attempted to be all encompassing. Although I tried to reach into people's imagination with my writing, but without sufficient background knowledge, my writing must have seemed like science fiction or fantasy. This excerpt from unit 3 shows my rather exaggerated claims:

> Simply put, computing power doubles every 2 years, and with each advancement, there is a game engine that will push it to its new theoretical limits. Optimally, a game engine would run on a super-computer, and power a simulation the likes of which have never been seen, an unfathomably huge and accurate portrayal of the world we inhabit, along with every physical law and property it obeys.

If I were to write this again, I would base the premise of the statement on solid facts, and I preface these types of claims with sources and citations. I definitely have work to do in improving my ability to relay technical knowledge to a non-technical audience. Lastly, the literature review I did for the last assignment was highly enjoyable for me. I feel like I put my heart into it. I wrote about raytracing and how it will be the go-to algorithm for real time rendering in the near future. Although like my first paper, it was missing some key data and figures to sufficiently back up my claims, it was otherwise full of accurate and descriptive information regarding the algorithm, its applications and its future. Overall, I found the research to be somewhat enjoyable (which is odd because research tends to be tedious and time-consuming). I ended up finding over 20 sources to use for this literature review, which surprised me. Typically I have a hard time finding sources for my papers, and the fact that I succeeded this time around delighted me. The northeastern library was an incredible tool which I will definitely use in the future. Learning about proper formatting for literature in my field will surely aid me in any writing endeavors that I pursue in the future. I enjoy writing, and I feel that I do not get enough time to dedicate to improving my writing abilities. Although I would rather write fiction and stories, this class definitely improved my skills in technical writing, and left me with valuable tools that will allow me to analyze and interpret any technical literature that I may encounter.